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#### Water ... Earth ... Fire ... Air ...

Power was once balanced among the four great nations. Then the Fire Nation attacked, plunging the world into a war that has lasted 100 years. The Avatar, master of all four elements, has been missing throughout this time of need. Now the Avatar has returned in the form of a 12-year-old Airbender named Aang. With the aid of his friends, Aang must accept his destiny and find a way to save the world.



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How Avatar Gets Its Kicks Sifu Kisu has all the right moves

Puzzle: Anime Mangatism Comic characters get Asian-style makeovers

Fire Nation's Most Wanted In any language, Aang is in trouble

48 Answers

Check out "Secret of the Fire Nation" on September 15 at 8 pm ET. Check local listings or for details.



Water Warl Katara makes a splash

> Bee Calm A honey of a story

Produced by the Nickelodeon Magazine Group. Editor: Andrew Brisman. Associate Editor: Dave Roman. Art Director: Tim Jones. Editorial Director: Laura Galen. Contributing Editor: Rachel Roswal. Comics Cantilever: Chris Duffy Managing Editor: Vanessa Johnson. Managing Editorial Intern: Kristen Male. Designer: Paul Tutrone. Copy Editor: Yaël Lewin. Researcher: Steven Stern Photo Researcher: Joe Hart, Assistant Editor: Aabye-Gayle Francis. Editorial Interns: Taylor Katz Maxine Wu, and Zara Zuckerman. Production Director: Lori Crook, Production Managers: Christian Lind and Maria Mack. Production Coordinators: Jen Alt and Natalie Casale, Design Director: Tina Strasberg. VP, Consumer Marketing: Anne Loganbuhl. Renewals and Billing Manager: Edelyn Sellitto. Fulfillment and Distribution Director: Alyssa Sherman. Circulation Manager: Pamela Schlacter, Circulation Coordinator: Jesse Pirraglia, Operations and Planning Director: Rolando Reves, Executive Assistant: Liza Torres VP, Publisher: Phylis Sparrow, Associate Publisher: n Rafferty, SVP: Dan Sullivan, President,

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NICK MAG PRESENTS (ISSN 1546-7465), Winter 2006 (September 2006), issue 18 © 2006 Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar: The Last Airbondor, and all related titles, logos, and characters are trademarks of Vaccom International Inc. All photos © Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Nickelodeon, Avatar Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. National Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. National Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. National Programme Vaccom International Inc. All rights reserved. Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko.

# NATION EXPLORATION

In Avatar: The Last Airbender, the world is divided among four nations:

Air, Water, Earth, and Fire. Our nation-by-nation tour will introduce you
to the show's characters. Also check out the map on page 24.

by Frank Pittarese



#### **Air**

Air is the element of freedom. The Air Nomads detached themselves from worldly concerns and found peace and harmony.

'If you want to be a bender, you have to let go of fear.'

#### Our Star Avata

#### AANG

Coconed in an iceberg for 100 years, Aang is the last Airbender and the last hope for a war-torn world. The 12-year-old Avatar is on a journey to master all four elements in order to defeat Fire Lord Ozai. Fun-loving Aang is a vegetarian, believes in nonviolence, can play the flute, and has a crush on Katara.



#### Favorite Teache

#### MONK GYATSO

When Aang trained at the Southern Air Temple 100 years ago, Gyatso was his mentor, friend, and father figure. This great Airbender was killed when the Fire Nation attacked the temple.

#### Yip, Yip, and Away!

#### **A**PPA

The only remaining flying bison, Appa is Anga's animal guide and means of transportation. The enormous beast weighs 10 tons and has five stomachs. Appa responds to the phrase "Yip, yip!" and can be summoned with a bison whistle (unless he's napping).



#### A Wing Thing

#### Момо

Discovered at the Southern Air
Temple, Momo is the last winged
lemur. Intelligent and
mischievous, Momo isn't
much of a fighter—he'd rather
eat burs and steal Sokka's food.

#### Supernatural Sightings

#### THE SPIRIT WORLD

As the Avatar, Aang is the bridge between the mortal and spirit worlds. Some of the denizens of this mystical plane include: Avatar Roku, a benevolent Firebender who was the Avatar's previous incarnation; Hei-Bei, the Spirit of the Forest, who transforms from a panda into a monster when angered; and Koh the Face-Stealer (right), a creepy millipede-like spirit who will literally steal your face if you show any emotion.





Water is the element of change. The people of the Water Tribe are capable of adapting to many things.

#### back off!

'I'm just a guy with a boomerang.

#### Liquid Asset

#### KATARA

Katara was a novice Waterbender in the Southern Water Tribe when she and her brother, Sokka, freed Aang from his iceberg. The 14-year-old is kind, brave, and passionate. Her skills have flourished to such a degree that she is now Aang's Waterbending Master. She has also learned to use her bending to heal. A fortune-teller predicted that Katara's true love is a very powerful bender. Will it be the Avatar, or will fate lead her in another, more fiery direction?

#### **Lunar Love**

#### PRINCESS YUE

The daughter of the Northern Tribe chief, Princess Yue was born gravely ill. Her father placed her in a pond where the moon and ocean spirits resided, and her health was restored. Yue later repaid that gift by sacrificing her mortal life to become

the new moon spirit.
Sokka had fallen
for the princess,
and her noble
act left him
brokenhearted.

#### The Whiny Warrior

#### SOKKA

Katara's 15-year-old brother is brash and goofy, yet also inventive and a good strategist. Despite not being a bender, Sokka proudly considers himself the leader of the group because he's "the oldest and a warrior." He can toss a sarcastic comment and a boomerang with equal skill. Sokka's favorite pastimes include eating and complaining.

#### **Featured Creatures**

#### ....

A gigantic sea serpent living off the coast of Kyoshi Island. This ferocious monster sports dozens of sharp teeth and can exhale water with incredible force. "Don't try to ride the Unagi," says Aang. "It's not fun."

#### KOALAOTTERS

Found at the North Pole, the koalaotters are, like many animals in *Avatar*; a combination of two familiar animals. They're also pretty darn cute.



# more NATION EXPLORATION



Earth is the element of substance. The

#### Mountain Mover

#### TOPH

The headstrong and combative Toph (pronounced tahf) doesn't like to be underestimated. Blind since birth, she can "see" with her feet by sensing the vibrations of anything that's touching the ground. She secretly fought in underground Earthbending tournaments as "The Blind Bandit," After meeting the Avatar, Toph ran away from home to be free from her overprotective father and to become Aang's Earthbending Master. Though she can be a bit arrogant and selfish, Toph is coming to learn the value of teamwork and friendship.

#### Old Friend

#### KING BUMI

A powerful Earthbender and childhood friend of Aang. He ruled

the Earth Kingdom city Omashu, Bumi may look feeble and act a bit silly-but he's much stronger and wiser than he appears. For his own reasons, he chooses to remain a prisoner of the Fire Nation in Omashu

#### Sokka Socker

#### SUKI

The leader of an all-girl troupe of warriors who protect their home, Kyoshi Island. The warriors wear traditional makeup and carry fans. But don't be fooled by these "dainty" accessories-the fans are sharp-edged and can deflect flame! Suki bested Sokka in combat, trained him, and made him blush with a kiss on the cheek.

People see me and think I'm weak. But I can take care of myself."

#### **Teen Trouble**

#### JET

The leader of a group of children orphaned by the Fire Nation. These "freedom fighters" live in an elaborate tree house hideout at the top of the forest. Jet is cocky, vengeful, and manipulative. While Katara was taken in by the bad boy's charms, Aang ended up fighting Jet in order to save innocent lives.

#### **Underground Rockers**

#### BADGERMOLES

These giant moles were the first Earthbenders. While they appear slow and dull-witted, they will fiercely protect their territory. Badgermoles are

soothed by the sound of music.



Fire is the element of power. The people of the Fire Nation have desire and will, and the energy and drive to achieve what they want.

\*You rise with the moon, I rise with the sun!\*

#### Hot-Bloode

#### PRINCE ZUKO

Banished from the Fire Nation by his father, Zuko travels the world with his Uncle Iroh. He is on a quest to capture the Avatar, believing that will restore his honor. Though often reekless, he is a fiercely skilled Firebender and a master swordsman. Zuko may be filled with rage, but, unlike his father or sister, he shows glimpses of humility and humanity. However, as long as the Avatar remains at large, Zuko will never know peace.

#### A Bad Dad

#### FIRE LORD OZAL

Father of Prince Zuko and Princess Azula, and current ruler of the Fire Nation, Ozai took the crown under very suspicious circumstances. The shadow-cloaked leader eagerly awaits the coming of Sozin's Comet, which will enhance Firebender abilities to a frightening degree. While Ozai views Zuko as a complete failure, Azula is his pride, sharing her father's dissostition toward cruelty and violence.

#### All-Terrain Animals

#### KOMODO RHINOS

These tough-skinned and temperamental creatures serve the Fire Nation as mounts for the cavalry and as beasts of burden. The Rough Rhinos, an elite group of five soldiers, took their nickname from the powerful animals.

#### The Jolly Genera

#### UNCLE IROH

A retired general and great hero of the Fire Nation. He was once destined to rule as Fire Lord, but the treacherous Ozai took the

crown for himself. Iroh is now Zuko's companion and mentor. Branded a traitor to the Fire Nation, he lives as a fugitive, but he can always find time to enjoy a good oun of tea or a

nice massage.

#### A Royal Pain

#### PRINCESS AZULA

Named after her grandfather, Fire Lord Azulon,
Zuko's sister is a ruthless, cold-blooded perfectionist.
She was appointed by Fire Lord Ozai to capture Zuko
and Iroh for their "crimes" against the Fire Nation and
has since added the Avatar to her hit list. Azula is an
extremely powerful Firebender, able to control the
forces of lighthing. She cannot, however, control her temper.

The creators of Avatar: The Last Airbender, Bryan Konietzko (far right) and Mike DiMartino (near right), met in 1995 in art school in Rhode Island. Since then, they have worked together on many shows, including King of the Hill and Family Guy. Bryan was also the art director for Invader Zim. They chatted with us about Avatar.



#### NICKELODEON MAGAZINE: You are both in charge, but who does what?

BRYAN KONIETZKO: I spend most of my day doing art direction—working with color, background painting, background design, character design, and prop design. Mike spends most of his day with our writing staff.

#### Where did you get the idea for using the four elements in the show?

BRYAN: I took a sketch of mine—a middle-aged balding guy with an arrow on his head—and made him a kid character. Then I did a drawing in which he was shepherding bison through the sky. At the time, Mike was really into a documentary about explorers who were trapped at the South Pole. It sort of came together. We thought, There's an air guy along with these water people trapped in a snowy wasteland...and maybe some fire people are pressing down on them...

#### How is the show different from the way you first imagined it?

BRYAN: Originally, Aang was going to be trapped in the iceberg for one thousand years, not one hundred. He was from a time when technology was much more developed than when he woke up. Momo was actually a little robot monkey. But we wanted a more ancient feeling, so we did away with a lot of the technology. MIKE DIMARTINO: We also had a whole pack of flying bison. First there were a dozen bison, then three, and then it got cut down to just Appa.

## Myth Conceptions

Bryan and Mike shared some of the influences and inspirations behind Avatar.

#### ANIME

"The best anime [Japanese animation] balances great action sequences with humor and emotion, something we try to do on Avatar. We love all the films of Hayao Miyazaki, especially Spirited Avava (below) and Princess Mononoke (right), Both

movies deal with spirituality and the environment in an entertaining way. Also, there's a lot of great animation.



#### ASIAN FILM

"Asian cinema is really good at action comedy. Shaolin Soccer is one of our favorite movies. It has tons of fantastic action and lots of funny moments. Some of the effects provided inspiration for how the bending moves might look on the show."



#### Have the characters changed much since you first came up with them?

MIKE: They've definitely developed a lot. We originally had a different idea for Sokka's personality: He was going to be much more low-key. But Jack De Sena [the voice of Sokka and a cast member on All That] brought a great liveliness to the role, so we started writing toward that strength.

#### Do either of you practice martial arts?

BRYAN: I do. When we came up with the show idea, one of the first things I did was drive all over town and try out a bunch of martial arts schools. That's how I met Sifu Kisu, and I've trained with him ever since. [See "How Avadar Gets Its Kicks" on page 42.]

#### What bending skill from the show would you like to have?

MIKE: I would go for the air scooter—to be able to balance on top of a little ball of wind that acts like a top and zips around.

BRYAN: I would like the glider—to be able to control wind currents.

### Which nation do each of you identify with most?

MIKE: I'd be with
the Airbenders just
because they have the
peaceful and nomadic culture.
BRYAN: I'm sorry to say that I
would probably be with the Fire Nation.

#### EASTERN PHILOSOPHY

"Buddhism and Taoism have been huge inspirations for the ideas behind *Avatar*. Many of Aang's beliefs, such as living in harmony with the planet and not eating meat, were inspired by these traditions.

Understanding and appreciating the elements is also an essential part of these philosophies."



"We had the opportunity to visit China last year and got to see a lot of amazing locations, such as the Great Wall, the Lama Temple, and the Forbidden City. We took a lot of pictures that we use as reference for the backgrounds in Avatar."





# Good vs. Evil. Start to Finish.

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# BOOM!













# DO YOU KNOW

Before you hop on a flying bison to travel across the Four Nations, you should know where you're going. Use this map as your quide.

Northern Water Tribe Northern Water Tribe
Thanks to its natural defenses,
this beautiful ice city has managed
to survive 100 years of war. With
the aid of Aang and friends, the
tribe recently fended off a fierce
siege by the Fire Nation.



- KEY
- Water Tribes
- Earth Kingdom
- Fire Nation
- Air Nomads



Avatar Roku's Temple Avatar Kokus Temple
Located on a crescent-shaped
volcanic island at the edge
of Fire Nation waters. This is
where Aang first communicated
with Roku's spirit. To help Aang
escape the clutches of the
Fire Nation, Roku had to









Omashu

Oma and Shu, two lovers from warring villages who became the first Earthbenders. The city King Bumi, but it is now under renamed New Ozai



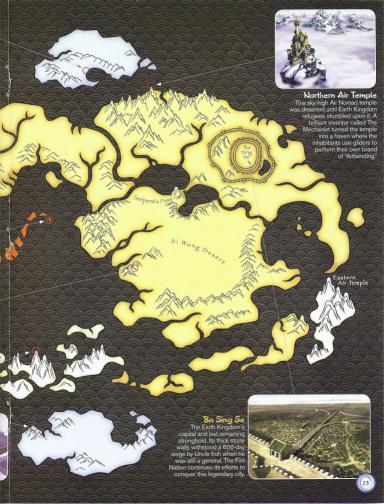
Southern Air Temple

with Airbending monks, flying bison, and winged



Southern Water Tribe Sokka and Katara's home. It is where they discovered Aang and freed him from his iceberg. The Southern Tribe's city has been devastated by Fire Nation raids.





# MAKING CONNECTIONS

Think Katara and Zuko will end up together? Prove it by solving this word maze. Get from WATER to FIRE by moving from square to square, but only when the combination of the word you're moving from and the word you're moving to creates a common word or phrase. For example, from WATER you can go to either FALL (to form waterfall) or BED (to form water bed). You can move horizontally and vertically, forward and backward, but not diagonally.

Solution on page 48.

|   | WATER | FALL | BACK   | SEAT  | BELT  | BUCKLE |
|---|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| - | BED   | BUG  | GROUND | HOG   | WASH  | UP     |
|   | OVER  | GAME | BALL   | KNEE  | HIGH  | SCHOOL |
|   | TIME  | воу  | SCOUT  | HAND  | SOME  | DAY    |
|   | оит   | SIDE | SHOW   | OFF   | HAIR  | CAMP   |
|   | DOOR  | KNOB | SWEET  | тоотн | BRUSH | FIRE   |

Remember: When you try to create a new word or phrase, always read the square you're on first and the square you're moving to second-no matter what direction you're moving in. Good luck on your journey!

# Roku Sudoku

Welcome. I am Roku, the previous incarnation of the Avatar. I have confidence that Aang can master the four elements—just as I believe you can solve these four sudoku puzzles. Notice that they use letters instead of numbers. When you complete each grid, the diagonal line starting in the upper-left corner will spell out a six-letter word that completes the clue. Do not fear—I know you can rise to any challenge!



Fill in the grid so that each row, column, and 2 x 3 box contains the six given letters.



\_\_ \_ \_ \_ was Master Pakku's first female student.

|     | THE REAL PROPERTY. | ORNI DOSA | DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTY OF THE |   | a District of the last | Maria Sale |
|-----|--------------------|-----------|--|---|------------------------|------------|
| ٨   |                    |           | U  | Н |                        | M          |
| A   | Α                  |           |  | U |                        |            |
| M   | S                  |           |  |   |                        |            |
| 0 5 |                    |           | M  |   |                        | Α          |
|     |                    |           | 0  |   |                        | S          |
| U   | Н                  | Α         |  |   |                        |            |

After being conquered by the Fire Nation,
\_\_\_\_ was renamed New Ozai.

|    |   | distantia |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| AD |   | R         | 0 |   |   | D |
| G  | G |           |   | 0 | N |   |
| N  |   | N         |   |   |   | Α |
| 0  | N | Α         |   |   |   |   |
| R  |   | 0         |   | D |   |   |

Uncle Iroh's nickname is The \_ \_ \_ \_ of the West.

| Λ      |   |       |   |   | Α |   |
|--------|---|-------|---|---|---|---|
| A<br>G | Α | N. S. |   | S | G | T |
| 0      | T | 0     |   |   |   | S |
| S      |   | G     | Υ |   | 0 |   |
| T      |   |       |   | Y |   | G |
| Y      |   | S     |   | Α |   |   |

Aang was trained by the great Airbender Monk  $\_$   $\_$   $\_$   $\_$   $\_$ .

# What Kind of Bender Are **Jou?**

Think you might have what it takes to master an element? Circle the icons next to all the statements that apply to you. Then check the scoring key to learn if you're a bender or a pretender.

by Frank Pittarese



Sometimes your head is in the clouds—along with the rest of your body.



- Your personality can sometimes be described as "flighty."
- You eat toast every morning-and you don't have a toaster.
- Everyone around you wears a life jacket.
- You pointed at Mount Rushmore and added your own face to the lineup.



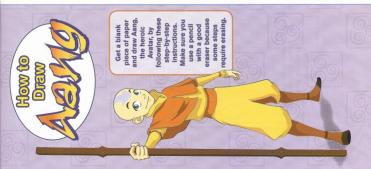
- When people call you a hottie, they're not talking about your looks.
- You can make a mountain out of a molehill-literally.
- When you play air guitar, you blow away the competition.
- If people say you're all wet, you say "Thank you."
- When your stomach rumbles, it registers 6.0 on the Richter scale.
- You're furry and enjoy giving piggyback rides to your friends.
- When you pass wind, you fly 100 feet into the sky.
- You can fill the bathtub with water while sitting in the living room.
- Your parents have installed a smoke detector-on your head.





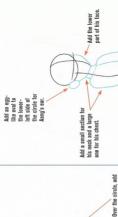


| YOUR RESULTS IF YOU CIRCLED:                            |  |   |  |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| MOSTLY ::<br>Splish-splash,<br>you're a<br>Waterbender. | MOSTLY :<br>Rock on<br>you're an<br>Earthbender. | MOSTLY ::<br>Hey, hot stuff,<br>you're a<br>Firebender. | MOSTLY ::<br>Fly high<br>you're an<br>Airbender. | ONLY :: You might be a flying bison. Just how furry are you? | NOTHING:<br>Bending may not<br>be your thing.<br>How are you with<br>a boomerang? |  |  |





Start with a circle connected to a long, slightly curved line—like a balloon on a string.



A little cup-like section completes

two shorter, slightly curved lines. They should cross, almost

like a t

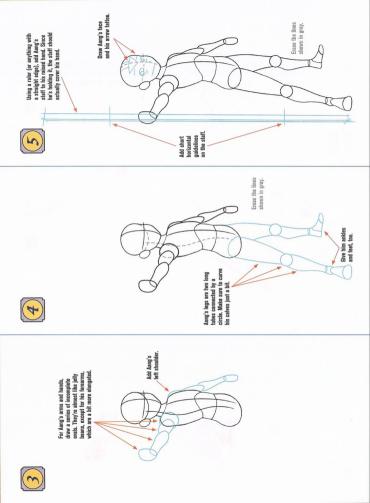
Think of Aang's

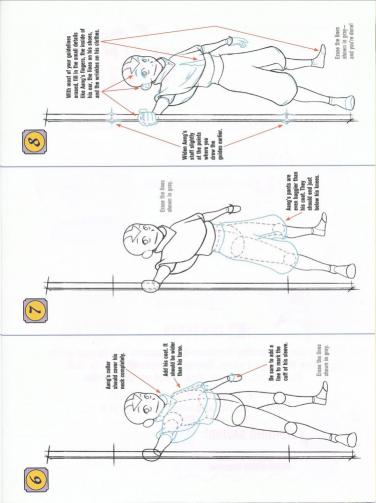
belly like a wrestler's trophy belt.

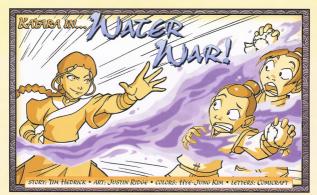
> A long vertical line down Aang's body will help keep

rack of his center.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE























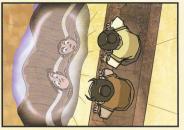


















# BEHIND-THE-SCENES SKETCHBOOK Avatar cocreator Bryan Konletzko gave us a rare peek

Avatar cocreator Bryan Konietzko gave us a rare peek at some of the doodles and drawings in his sketchbook.

# Momo A-Go-Go

"Momo is my favorite character to draw. I'm always curious what he is up to. A lot of his poses and body language come from the memories of my childhood cat, Buddy. Many people from the memories of my childhood cat, buddy. Many people have told me that Momo reminds them of their cats, too,"



## The Dude Can Doodle

"I rarely have time in my schedule to just sit and draw, so whenever I'm in a production meeting, I'm usually doodling. Sometimes these doodles turn into character designs for the show."

















## UNITED NATIONS:

# The Fans of AVATAR

Some viewers are content to just watch Avatar on TV, but others would rather LIVE it. Take a look at some fans who are bending over backward to celebrate the show.

### Comically Speaking

Avatar's amazing artwork has inspired fans to make their own art. One megafan named Isaia created a comic about how being addicted to the show can change your life:

You've found yourself becoming friends with the most unlikely people just because of one common interest,,





You now think that hanging our and drinking fee with upon elegacy to the fee of the control of t



#### Cosplaying Is Better Than Watching

Short for costume play, cosplay is a huge craze in Japan and is spreading to the U.S. People team up to create costumes based on specific characters. Then they wear them to comic and anime conventions. Some enter masquerade contests, where they perform humorous skits—in character of course.



"It can take anywhere
from a week to months to make a
costume. Sometimes it takes weeks
just to find the right materials."
—Tina Lam
(PRINCESS AZULA)

"It's fun to take on the characters' personalities and try to act as much like them as possible. It's a vacation from real life."

—Abby Avis (TOPH)

### Hot Links

Thanks to die-hard fans, new Avular websites are constantly popping up on the Net. Two of the most all-encompassing sites are AvatarSpirit.Net and Distant Horizon [musogato.com/avatar/index2.html]. AvatarSpirit.Net is a virtual encyclopedia with everything from character bios and creator interviews to episode transcripts, screen shots, and audio clips. Distant Horizon also contains tons of in-depth info, and it has popular forums for general discussion, fan fiction, and fan art.

"Maintaining the site is very time-consuming. I've spent many all-nighters working on updates. Let's just say my work is never done, but I give it my best shot!" —Jade, webmaster of Distant Horizon

"Tve really come to appreciate the importance of the whole crew that works on Avatar. It's amazing to see the effort and dedication required to make this world come to life." —Chris Smith, founding member of AvatarSpirit.Net

## Ship Shapers

Some fans have invented their own lingo to reference possible love connections. Are you a supporter of Katara and Aang's relationship? Then you're a member of the Kataang club. Think Katara and Zuko make a better couple! You're all about Zutara! Combining the characters' names is part of "shipping" (from relationship)—the phenomenon where fans champion established or potential pairings.





centuries-old martial arts positions. create characters' moves based on consultant. He helps the animators Sifu Kisu, a kung fu and tai chi teacher, is Avatar's martial arts Kisu showed us some moves from the show.



strates (above, left) how his arms would lift him into the air. performs a move, he's like a helium balloon." Kisu demon-(above) can defy the laws of gravity. Kisu told us that to figure out an Air Nation move, he and the animators asked, How would a person fly? "When Aang



























































For those Fire Nation soldiers or bounty hunters who don't read classical Chinese. here's a translation of the wanted poster that has appeared several times on Avatar.



#### · Wanted: The Avatar

The first two lines are horizontal and read from left to right. The four Chinese characters in the second line translate to "Avatar"-vou can also spot them in the show's logo. (A more literal translation for "Avatar" would be: "the divine medium who has descended upon the mortal world.")

This fugitive knows Airbending, can create whirlwinds, and can flee like the wind. Hunters, be extremely cautious! By the decree of the Fire Gord.

Unlike the first two lines, the rest of the poster is written in a more traditional Chinese style, where the characters are arranged in vertical columns that read from top to bottom. The columns should be read from right to left.

#### The official seal of Fire Gord Ozai

The seal serves as Ozai's signature and makes this an official document. In other words, the Fire Lord means business!

#### ANSWERS Roku Sudoku (page 27):

Making Connections (page 26):

|           |           |       |          |        |        | _ | _ |   | _ | _ | _ | - | _ | _ | _ | _  | _ |
|-----------|-----------|-------|----------|--------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| was suck  |           |       |          | K      | T      | S | R | Α | V | 0 | S | U | Н | Α | M |    |   |
|           | СК        | SEAT  | BELT     | BUCKLE | R      | Α | ٧ | s | K | Т | Α | M | Н | U | S | 0  |   |
| BED BUG   |           |       |          |        | Α      | S | T | K | ٧ | R | S | 0 | A | M | U | JH |   |
|           | GROUND    | HOG   | WASH     | UP     | ٧      | R | K | Α | Т | S | U | Н | М | S | 0 | Α  |   |
|           |           |       |          |        | S      | ٧ | Α | Т | R | K | M | U | 0 | Α | Н | S  |   |
| OVER      | OVER SAME | - LL  | KNEE     | HIGH   | SCHOOL | T | K | R | ٧ | S | Α | Н | Α | S | 0 | M  | U |
| TIME BOY  |           |       |          |        | D      | G | N | Α | R | O | G | Т | S | О | Α | Υ  |   |
|           | SCOUT     | HA    | - OVIIIL | T Y    | A      | R | 0 | N | G | D | A | Y | 0 | s | G | T  |   |
| 0         |           |       |          | HAIR   | CA AP  | G | D | A | 0 | N | R | T | 0 | A | G | Υ  | s |
| 00        | -         |       |          | nain   | Caran  | 0 | N | R | G | D | Α | s | G | Υ | T | 0  | Α |
| DOOR KNOB | SWEET     | тоотн | BRUSH    |        | N      | Α | D | R | 0 | G | 0 | Α | Т | Υ | S | G  |   |
|           | SWEET     | IOUIH | bnosn    | _      | R      | 0 | G | D | Α | N | Υ | S | G | Α | Т | 0  |   |

nime Mangatism (pages 46-7): On top of the school (left to right): Snoopy (on doghouse), Marvin the Martian (with flag). In front of and on fence (left to right): Calvin on top of Hobbes (to the right of tree), Grampa and Julie (in front of Hobbes). Lisa Simpson (with saxophone), Charlie Brown (flying kite), Bart Simpson (on skateboard), Jimmy In front of Induction, Last simplified when solopolytein, Creating Control tripling about a collegate violent account for the first of the part of the

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ILLUSTRATION: Cover: Bryan Konietzko. 28: Courtesy Nickelodeon (Aang): Wayno (all others). 29-31: deon Creative Resor steps), "How to Draw Aang" based on steps created by Walter Fos How to Draw Avatar book will be on sale in March 2007. 40: Kim Miranda aka lesia (fan comic from her wehsite aaia.deviantart.com).

OTHER CREDITS: Special thanks Bryan Konietzko, Marcie Longoria, Hye Jung Kim, Jenna Luttrell, and Ashley St. reur for all their help! 40: Thanks to all the cosplayers: Katherine Schilling (Aang in top photo), Whitney Brown (Kyoshi), Brooke Woolfson (Jun), Laura photo), Abigail Levinson (Sokka), Tina Lam (Azula), Nicole Ciaramella (Mai),

#### CREDITS

and Morgan Ditta (Ty Lee). 48: Chinese translation by KTChong and Dr. Siu-Leung Lee. NICK MAG PRESENTS (ISSN

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